

Eileen

BY BELLE RADCLIFFE LAVERACK

I SHALL call her Eileen, because that is what she always called herself and that is what her father had always called her, and surely they were the two who knew the most about it. But on the school records her name stood as Martha—Martha Higgins—and as Martha she was known in the Higgins household and in the neighborhood; but remember, to us she will always be just Eileen.

This is how Eileen came to be incorporated with the Higgins household. Four—no, five—years ago her father had died. "Sort of faded away like," said the neighborhood. He had been a minister of the gospel. From across the waters he had come, bringing Eileen with him—a dreamy, sad-eyed, perhaps a broken-hearted man, and in some way he had drifted into the great city and into the little parish in that crowded, dingy quarter of the city. Here he had lived only a little while, and then—what was to become of Eileen? The parish met and discussed it, and then Mrs. Higgins discussed it with Mr. Higgins, and then they went to the Elders, or whatever they are called in that particular kind of denomination, and announced—or Mrs. Higgins announced—that they would adopt Eileen.

"She'll be ever so useful by and by," she had said in her talk with Mr. Higgins. "Seein' as how we've only boys, it 'd be nice to have a girl. I do need some one to help me with the house and with the babies. That girl that the Jenkins adopted—Annie—just see what a help she is to Mrs. Jenkins; just as spry and handy about things. I'll change her name, though. Eileen's sort of queer and moonshiny—Martha's what I'll call her, Martha Higgins; that sounds good and sensible."

This had happened when Eileen was only five years old; now it was five years later, and Eileen, being ten, was pronounced—nay, more than pronounced, she

was proclaimed, publicly recognized, as a failure. In the home of her adoption she was a constant, an irritating disappointment. And, indeed, according to any Martha standard to be attained and maintained, Eileen was a failure; if we define success as adaptation to one's environment, then scandalous indeed was her unsuccess.

These are some of the things that Eileen did—or rather didn't do, for it was what Eileen didn't do that caused the Higginses and the neighborhood to shudder. But listen to Mrs. Higgins herself talking it over with Mrs. Jenkins, the proprietor of the immaculate Annie. Mrs. Jenkins had heard the same plaint many times before, but she always enjoyed the woes of Mrs. Higgins and their implied contrast to her own extraordinary good fortune.

"Oh, she's hopeless," sighed Mrs. Higgins. "Just hopeless is what she is. I puts her to fryin' the chops, and when I comes back, there is the chops all black as cinders; and what was she doin'? 'Watchin' the clouds comin' out of the kettle,' she says, 'and melt away like clouds in the sky,' she says in that queer voice of hers. Or I puts her to wipin' up the floor, thinkin' there's no harm she can do there; and when I looks in to see how she's gettin' on, if she ain't settin' just where I left her, starin' at the shadder the plant there in the winder is makin' on the floor! 'It's dancin',' she says, smilin' up at me. 'It's holdin' out its skirts and dancin' and courtesyin' to me,' she says. Now, ain't that crazy? And then I thinks maybe she could do a little o' the babies' washin', so I gives her a little tub and sets her goin', and what does she do? Plays with the soap-suds in the tub—that's what she does. 'They're foam flowers,' she says. 'The kind that used to grow along the shore where father and I used to live,' she says. 'Father, he told me about them—the

white foam flowers.' I'm just sick of her, that's what I am. In a few years she can go to work somewhere and take care of herself."

"Don't you ever lick her?" inquired Mrs. Jenkins. This was, of course, a superfluous question, but Mrs. Jenkins enjoyed details.

"Don't do no good," groaned Mrs. Higgins; and details followed.

Oh, there's no doubt about it, Eileen was queer. If you had happened to be in the neighborhood some morning, and had met a very thin and very white-faced little girl whose old shawl, of a faded green color, was fastened about her as no one else's shawl was fastened, and whose gray eyes, under black brows that curved like a sea-gull's wing, seemed fixed on distant things; and if this little girl were singing or crooning to herself a strange little song as she wandered along; and if the carrots, which she had been sent to buy in a hurry, were dropping one by one out of the bag as she went—why, that was sure to be Eileen.

"Where do you learn the songs you sing?" she would be asked, and always the answer would be, "I never learned them; I just know them."

But there was one respect in which Eileen was not quite as hopeless as in all the others—even Mrs. Higgins would acknowledge that sometimes—and that was in her dealings with the babies. There was always a Higgins baby; vast, ponderous babies they were—Eileen bent and swayed under the weight of them like some slender stem under a burden of snow.

To her each baby was like unto another. She invariably called it Jimmy, regardless of sex, because that had been the name of the first baby. Exasperating, this, to Mrs. Higgins. It—the baby—was always nicer just at the beginning; it appeared and you were given it to hold, and you sat in a big rocking-chair and rocked it and sang to it; then it grew heavier and heavier, until when it grew too heavy you put it down on the floor, and it would begin to get about by itself and would probably take hold of the stove just when you happened to be thinking of something else. Then by and by it gradually raised itself up and took to pushing a chair about; and then—another baby, and the cycle recommenced.

That things went differently sometimes with the other families and with other babies, Eileen soon observed. There had been the Murphy baby: it had not grown heavier; it had grown smaller and smaller and its cry weaker and weaker, until there had come a day when you were told that if you hadn't been a bad girl you would be taken in to see it; but, of course, you had been bad, so you stayed outside with the little crowd; and they carried a white box out of the Murphy house and put it in a white carriage and drove away, while you, standing on the sidewalk, shivered, you didn't know why. Eileen thought very much about this. The baby never came back. Where had it gone?

Now, on the evening of the above recorded conversation of Mrs. Higgins with Mrs. Jenkins the neighborhood was in an uproar. Eileen had done the very worst thing she had ever done: she had mislaid the Higgins baby!

It was late in the afternoon when Mrs. Higgins came home. Eileen she found bending over the little box of seeds that she had planted at school. Out of the earth tiny green blades were coming, and Eileen was talking to them and fingering them adoringly.

"Where's the baby, Martha?" asked Mrs. Higgins. Eileen looked up, looked around the room, looked at Mrs. Higgins, and then her little figure seemed to shrink and her eyes grew big and black. To see Eileen's eyes when she was frightened was to think of some quivering little mountain lake just before the storm strikes.

"I don't know where he is," she gasped. "I don't remember where I left him."

Mrs. Higgins put her hands on Eileen's shoulders. She was a large woman and her grip was very heavy. "You don't know?" she said. "You don't know where you left my baby? Think! Think!"

Eileen's black brows came together over her storm-driven eyes, and her little hands clenched tightly. Terrible it always was, this trying to remember!

"We went out," she said, slowly, as if feeling her way back along the past hours. "I carried Jimmy and we went and went, and it was very hot; and sometimes when I was tired I put him down, and there was a window where there were birds

singing, and we looked at them; and then there came a music man, and then I don't remember any more."

Mrs. Higgins relaxed her hold on Eileen's shoulders and seized her by the hand. "Come along," she said, starting for the door. "Come along with me and show me where you went," and she strode out of the room and out of the house, dragging Eileen after her. "Which way?" she demanded when they reached the sidewalk, and Eileen, who had just stumbled down the steps and who didn't know up from down by this time, pointed.

The evening was very hot and sultry. All the doors and windows were crowded and the streets thick with children. Through this throng swept Mrs. Higgins, breathing wrath and denunciation, a very Hecuba of despair, with Eileen—to badly mix our figures—swinging at the wheels of her chariot. Here was an invigorating novelty indeed for the listless populace—a lost baby, a frantic mother, an offender haled to justice—many of varied tongues and sizes rallied to the standard of Mrs. Higgins.

When they reached the bird-store, their first landmark—for by pure luck Eileen had pointed in the right direction—an alarmed proprietor came from his supper in the back of the shop to meet them. He was a Frenchman, and the sight of the gesticulating crowd about the door reminded him unpleasantly of scenes lived through in his native France. But when he saw Eileen he smiled, for he was very fond of her.

"What!" he exclaimed, as soon as he had grasped the reason for their coming. "Zat zo great babee lost! How could zat be lost! No, he has not been left in my shop. Ze leetle girl and ze great babee zay hafe not been here zis afternoon; yesterday afternoon zay were here. Mais, not to-day, no!"

A fresh sensation—the front ranks thrilled. Mrs. Higgins, in the very front, turned upon Eileen.

"You hear that?" she said through her teeth. "He says you wasn't here this afternoon. Well, if you wasn't here, where was you, then?"

Eileen looked up at the bird-store man, her friend. She put her free hand upon his arm. "Wasn't it this afternoon?" she whispered. But even as she asked

came the staggering realization that it had not been this afternoon, but yesterday, as he said.

The bird-store man looked down at the despairing eyes and at the hand on his arm, so thin that it reminded him of one of his birds' claws; then, to his everlasting honor and the honor of his race, he lied—superbly.

"Ah!" he ejaculated. "How I am stupid! How I forget! Zay were here zis afternoon, for a long time zay were here. I have to go out and I leave zem here. Ze babee I have not seen. Mais, he can be here somewhere. It is zo easy to lose a babee. Often I lose zem myself. It is quite probable my wife she know. Marie!" he called. "Marie, viens ici!"

All this time the door in the rear of the store had been ajar, and black eyes, several pairs of them, had been peering through the crack. Now the door opened wide, revealing Madame, and three or four small people clinging to her skirts. From the room beyond came the sound of a baby's cry. At the sound of the cry Mrs. Higgins, dropping Eileen's hand, sprang forward, the crowd pressing behind her. Eileen was forgotten—forgotten by every one except the ready Frenchman, who, unnoticed, pushed her through an opening in the counter.

"Go out by zat leetle door," he whispered, "and run quick. By and by you come back here."

Now, the shop was on a corner and "zat leetle door" opened upon a very narrow alleyway. Down this alleyway fled Eileen, unthinking, unknowing whither, the terror of the hunted in her heart. When she at last stopped it was because there sounded a clap of thunder so loud and so near that it seemed to be right across her path. She looked about her; it had grown very dark, and there where she found herself it was all strange. She had never seen the place before nor any of the people who were hurrying past. No one paid the slightest attention to her, every one being very busy getting their doors and windows shut and themselves and their children in before the storm. Drops began to fall, heavy, menacing drops; it was impossible for her to go back now to the bird-store man. Where *could* she go? Near her was an open door and she went in.

It opened, she found, on a narrow passageway, and, as by this time the rain was sweeping in at the door, she ran on to the other end. Here was another door, also open. Through it she saw a little, very muddy yard, and across the yard a shed. Eileen darted for the shed, for the farthest corner of it, and dropped down on the pile of—of—she didn't know what—that was on the floor. Crouching here, her arms over her head, she waited, while outside the storm roared and growled and stamped as it went hunting about trying to find her—Eileen. Every now and then she opened her eyes for a second, and then she saw the lightning that was lighted to help find her, Eileen; and the rain-drops that were sent to get word of her were all hurrying about and were trying to beat in the little roof that covered her. And it was all sent, all being done, by Mrs. Higgins, whose voice in your ear was as the voice of the thunder, and the gleam of whose eyes was as the sting of the lightning.

Excepting that she trembled, Eileen kept perfectly still. Any moment she expected to be discovered. What would happen to her then she didn't know, only it would be the worst thing that had ever yet happened to her. But about her the great storm prowled in vain; then, still snapping and snarling, it began to move away—fainter and fainter it sounded. Eileen uncovered her face. Only once in a while now the lightning looked in at the door, and very few—and they very tired—rain-drops continued to knock against the shed.

Eileen was very tired, too. Feeling about on the floor, she found an old sack, and rolling it up for a pillow, she lay down. It wasn't safe to go out yet. Mrs. Higgins might at any time unloose the storm again upon her. Perhaps it was waiting outside now, ready to spring at her.

But, although she felt safe for the moment, Eileen wasn't happy at all. Now that the terror was passed she could think again, and as she thought she began to cry. Where was Jimmy? Where had she left him? Where was he in the midst of the storm?

Of all the dynasty of the Jimmies he had been her favorite, the only thing not in his favor being his size, and even

that was gratifying to her, because people often stopped to praise him and to ask if he wasn't very heavy.

He had been a real companion, Jimmy had. He always seemed to like to do just what she liked to do. He would sit contentedly for hours while she sang to him about the clouds that were passing over their heads. He loved the birds in their funny little cages; he loved the goldfish in the big bowl at the fish-store and tried to grab them. The goldfish at the fish-store! *That* was where she had been this afternoon. Now it all came back to her. There had been a man who told her stories about the fish and she had put Jimmy down and he had gone to sleep; and there had come a music man—not *the* music man, but one who had made sounds unlike any she had ever heard before, very strange and fascinating—and she had followed him; but whither? And had she taken Jimmy with her or had she left him sleeping placidly beside the goldfish bowl?

Oh, why did she always forget! No one else ever forgot. Eileen was lying all this time opposite the door of the shed, and as she stared out into the black night she noticed that it was growing less black. She began to distinguish the outlines of the buildings—they were not very high—and above them the sky was brightening. Some one was moving away the clouds. Eileen smiled. It was the moon; and the moon was to her what it was not to any one else, it was to her the white soul of her mother. Her father had told her so. His telling her had been the one thing she remembered clearly of their life in that other country before they crossed the sea. It had been a dark night, as this night was, and there had been a sound of waves on a beach; then it had grown brighter and her father had pointed upward. "Look," he said, and she had looked; and out of the sky had come something wonderfully white. "What is it?" she whispered, and he replied very low, "It is the white soul of your mother, Eileen, come to watch over us." And she still came to watch over Eileen, although at strange and quite unexplained intervals and in equally strange and unexplained shapes and sizes. She had come now because from afar off down the sky she had heard the noise of

the storm and had known that Eileen had need of her. Very gently she made her way through the hushed clouds; very gently she dismissed them, only one remaining, a very little one that she probably wanted to keep near her; and to her side she called a clear white star.

Now Eileen had decided, after much meditation, that if the moon was the white soul of her mother, more lovely, more radiant than was any other soul, why, then the stars must be the souls of other people, babies most of them; and the clear white one that now lingered near her mother and that seemed to love to play beside her, why, that must be the soul of the Murphy baby.

Tenderly the white moon looked in upon Eileen. All about her she poured her calm, assuring light. Then higher and higher she floated—floated out of sight; and all the light went with her, all excepting one long ray that, like a slender sentinel, waited watchful at the door.

Thus protected Eileen fell asleep.

It was daylight when she awoke with a start. Some one, she was sure, was calling her. "Wake up," she had heard in her sleep. "Come! Come! Wake up!" So she arose obediently, but very slowly. She was stiff all over. There was the little dirty shed, there was the little dirty yard, there was the shabby house across the yard. No one was awake yet. Everything was quiet and nowhere, *nowhere* was Mrs. Higgins.

Cautiously Eileen peered out of the door. Oh, but some one was awake, after all! There over the shabby house was the cloud, the same little cloud that had waited by her mother's side last night. It was not white now, it was pink all over, like Jimmy's cheeks when he woke up in the morning; the little cloud must have just awakened, too.

"Did you call me?" asked Eileen. Now that she thought of it the voice in her sleep had been a small cloudy voice.

The cloud did not answer, but it began to move slowly and as it moved it beckoned. "Follow me," it seemed to say. "Follow me." And Eileen, without a shadow of hesitation, stepped out and followed. She had been guarded through the night and now she was to be guided

straight to where Jimmy was. Eileen had often before followed the clouds. Disastrous, shipwrecked little expeditions they had been. More than anything else she loved them. Lovely, winged messengers bearing word from lands never seen to lands never seen. Upon what errands were they bound? Who had sent them? They, too, seemed to forget sometimes and to go dreaming purposeless across the unpaved, unpeopled sky country. Sometimes they would let fall the rain-drops they were carrying, and then they looked sad and she felt very sorry for them. What would their Mrs. Higgins say? But there was no lack of purpose in this particular young cloud that was now guiding Eileen. It opened its fluffy wings, it puffed out its round cheeks and fairly scampered over the otherwise deserted sky.

The streets were almost deserted, too. Eileen, her eyes always on the cloud, didn't notice where she was going; but she did notice after a while, with a great misgiving, that the cloud was growing smaller. It had long ago begun to lose its rosy color and was becoming pale—paler and paler—smaller and smaller—it was going to die.

In despair she stood gazing up at it expiring there before her. But as she stood there gazing up, there came floating down from out of the sky a beautiful sound—a beautiful song—a song such as some sky bird might sing. Perhaps it was the voice of the dying cloud—its swan-song—she had always known they could sing.

It grew louder and came nearer—nearer—until it seemed just above her. Eileen, turning her eyes from the now blank sky, saw that she was standing by a high brick wall. There was nothing unusual about this (hers was a world of walls), but there was something unusual about this particular wall. Over the top of it trees were blowing; green, heavy boughs were actually hanging down, almost touching her, and in one of these trees the cloud bird was singing. Eileen nodded understandingly. The dear little cloud was not dead, after all; it had only vanished for a moment, and had now reappeared in the big tree as a singing bird, still to lead her. The trouble was that the tree was inside and Eileen was

outside the wall. It was too impossibly high to climb, and she couldn't fly—previous experiment had taught her that—so she began its circuit.

At first it was all smooth and red and impenetrable, but after she turned the corner it became more mysterious, consequently more hopeful. Trees and shrubs grew close against it—not so close, though, but that Eileen found she could walk along between them and the wall. Once upon a time there must have been a path there. Then just where the shrubbery was thickest she came upon a little wooden gateway.

It couldn't have been opened for a long time, for it was almost covered with vines. The latch was stiff and rusty, but the gate opened with almost magical ease—only the tender little hands of the vines clinging to it and trying to hold it back. Eileen entered and the gate closed behind her.

She didn't stir for a few moments. She only shut her eyes tight and then opened them again very stealthily—yes, it was still there:

Heavily shaded paths stretching away on each side of her. Before her, too, a path green with moss leading to a sunlit space beyond.

Oh, that sunlit space beyond! Would it vanish before she came to it? Would it not be safer to stand just where she was standing and look at it and look at it? It was so easy to frighten away a beautiful dream. So she waited, scarcely breathing, but the bright vision faded not.

Slowly she began to walk toward it—a ragged little moth drawn by the radiant star—walked right on out of the shade of the path into all that wonder of light and glowing color right into the heart of the dream.

Oh, but it was beautiful in the heart of the dream! Flowers lived there, flowers and flowers. On all sides of her they spread. There was green grass there, too, and high waving trees, and in the centre of it all a clear, round pool of water. In the water white clouds were floating, resting there. Was this, then, where the clouds came from? And was this where the stars went in the daytime? Everywhere, on the petals of the flowers, on the blades of grass, they were hanging, little sparkling stars. Eileen took a deep

breath. How sweet the dream was to smell, too!

She started to go about among the flowers. They did not seem in the least afraid—rather, it appeared they liked her being there and turned to look at her as she passed. Now she came to where the roses lived. Even if it all crumbled away she must touch one, just one. It was pink and wide open. Very gently she put her grimy little hands about its soft petalled face; but it did not shrink, it did not fade away. What a dream it was!

It was a wonderfully silent dream, too. It made no noise, excepting that it sang always like birds, the voice of the cloud bird soaring high above all the others like a little beacon of song sounding faithfully, waiting to pilot her small bark errant into the patient harbor.

Slowly she drifted down the wide path that, like some quiet channel, flowed onward between softly colored fragrant shores, drifted, until she came to another path. Here she turned, for the cloud bird was calling at the end of this green alley, and there was the sound of rain-drops, careless rain-drops that had nothing to do. She could see them there now, dancing up and down in a lovely basin of water. And what else did she see?

A pile of stones rising in the centre of the basin, and upon the stones a round, dimpled, white figure without any clothes on. Its head was thrown back; it was laughing triumphantly but silently. In its fat arms it was clasping something tightly—a fish, that was what it was—a big fish; and in the water goldfish were swimming about. It was a baby sitting there. It was Jimmy!

Just in front of him Eileen came to anchor, while overhead the cloud bird spent himself in a splendid celebration of triumphant song. It was no mean achievement to have steered Eileen into port!

Eileen went forward and held out her arms. "Jimmy," she said. But the baby made no answer; he just continued kicking out his fat legs and laughing his silent laugh, clasping all the while the fish. Then she sat down on the grass to think it out.

He had waked up after she left him at the fish-store. Beside him was the goldfish bowl with its glittering contents. He had plunged for them, he had fallen in,

he had been drowned, he had died, and here he was.

They were always very white after they had died, she had been told, and very still, but they smiled and looked happy. Jimmy certainly looked happy, as if he wanted nothing else in the world.

She had wondered and wondered where they went after they died. This, then, was where they went; they went into a dream that never woke up. And what was a dream that never woke up? Why, was it not heaven?

But if this were heaven, how more than strange it was that she, Eileen, should be here, she who had been told again and again that she was so bad she would never be allowed in!

It must be—thus she argued—because there was no one else here to take care of Jimmy. He couldn't do anything for himself yet. If he were to drop the fish, for instance, who could get it for him? Eileen felt very proud of Jimmy perched upon the rock. He was *so* clean, *so* fat. Somehow she didn't feel sorry he was dead. Why should she? He looked absolutely contented.

She went on with her thinking. This being heaven, then the Murphy baby must be somewhere about, and her mother and her father and other people, all having a good time in their quiet way. She would go and look for them.

So once again she set out upon her pilgrimage. She had hardly started before she noticed at the other end of the shaded path an open door and broad steps leading up to it. Noiselessly she approached, noiselessly she ascended the steps, then she stopped; it was very strange, but there it was. In some way it would have to be fitted into the scheme of things.

She was looking into a large wooden-raftered room—one side of it was all windows. There were a few figures in the room, white, motionless, always silent, as befitted the nature of the place. They were for the most part a very sad-looking lot. Poor people, they must have died in dreadful ways.

There was a body without any head. There was a head without any body. One, a very large lady, interested Eileen especially. She had wings, but she had lost both her arms and her head. She must have killed herself while trying to fly.

There were, besides, one or two figures so covered up with bandages that you couldn't see what was the matter with them. But there was one person in the room who was neither motionless nor quiet, nor yet injured. This one stood not far from the door, so absorbed in what he was doing that he never saw Eileen at all. He was a very terrestrial object—tall, thin, somewhat stooping, without any coat on and with sleeves rolled up. He was doing something to the head of a baby; evidently a very young baby, for it wasn't white yet. It looked not unlike the way the Jimmies did the first time you saw them.

As the young man—for Eileen decided that he was nothing more unusual than that—worked, now touching the baby gently, now walking off a little to look at it, he whistled softly; then he would stop whistling and sing for a moment, then go back to the whistling again.

"Hark! Hark! The lark at heaven's gate sings!" sang the young man.

Eileen admired this performance very much. Perhaps he wasn't human, after all. But, although he knew so much about music, he didn't know much about babies, she decided. If he were making this one, or even fixing it over, he was giving it a great deal too much hair. She must tell him.

So, "They don't have hair as long as that," she said. "Not until they are white."

The young man stopped his whistling and turned toward her; then he did just what Eileen did when she first walked into the dream. He shut his eyes for a moment and then he opened them again. Yes, she was still there! She was so forlorn, so grimy, she was so utterly unlike anything about her that it was as if a rent had been made in the rich fabric of her background and through it he caught a glimpse of the dingy world without. But when he went over to the steps and looked down at her, right down into her eyes, the dingy world vanished, and he found he was looking into the garden again and through the garden into something fairer that lay beyond.

"Do you really think the baby's hair is too long?" he said, smiling at her. "He's older than he looks. Won't you come in and examine him for yourself?"

Eileen entered the room and went up to the baby and began to study him gravely, while the young man, leaning against the wall with his hands in his pockets, watched her.

"Yes," she said at last, "he is older than he looks. He has a good many teeth."

"Do you know very much about babies?" asked the young man.

"Oh yes," said Eileen. "That is why I am here. They had to have some one to look after Jimmy."

"Jimmy?" he questioned. "Jimmy?"

"Perhaps you don't know him yet," replied Eileen. "He only came yesterday. He's sitting out there with the gold-fish—"

From where they stood they could see down the vistaed path the figure of Jimmy rampant upon his rock sable.

"Oh!" said the young man. "So that's his name. I'm glad to know it." He walked over to the steps while he was speaking. "Come and sit down," he said, "and let's talk. I'm sure we have lots to talk about."

Eileen sat down beside him and they looked at each other.

"What are you?" she asked.

"I?" replied the young man. "I'm a sculptor."

A sculptor! What heavenly thing might that be!

"What do you do?" she next asked.

The sculptor had taken a pipe out of his pocket and was filling it very deliberately. Everything he did was deliberate.

"Oh, mine is a heavenly occupation," he replied. "I take clay out of the earth, just common clay, and make beautiful things and people out of it."

"Do you help God?" she questioned.

He lighted his pipe, and after puffing away at it for a few moments: "Yes," he then said, "I help God. I'm one of His apprentices. I like to think He couldn't get along without me."

"Did you help God make Mrs. Higgins?" asked Eileen. "She isn't beautiful."

"No," replied the sculptor, "I didn't have anything to do with her. It must have been some one else. God has some very poor assistants."

"I suppose," said Eileen, thoughtfully—"I suppose that God stays here all the

time. He never used to come to where I lived."

"Yes," answered the sculptor, "I suppose He is here all the time, only I'm generally too busy to notice Him. But I have seen Him here often in the cool of the evening. He always walks in gardens in the cool of the evening. And now," he went on, "it's my turn to ask questions. Tell me what you are and what you do."

So Eileen, in that strange, old-world voice of hers, with her hands clasped about her knees and her eyes dark with hostile memories, told him that she was Eileen. Told him of the malevolent power that made for evil and that worked under the sinister name of Higgins. Told of Jimmy forgotten, of the flight, of the storm, of the protecting moon and the guiding star, of her coming at last into heaven.

Her epic concluded, there was silence between them. The sculptor had stopped smoking. His pipe had gone out, and he was gazing before him over the woven lights and shadows of the path.

"It is heaven, isn't it?" he said. "I actually forget it sometimes."

"Do you forget, too?" asked Eileen.

"Oh Lord!" said the sculptor. "Do I forget! There are some people who think I don't do anything else. But do you know what I think?" he continued, turning toward her. "I think that we people who they say forget are really the ones who remember. We are remembering all the time and thinking all the time of what the rest of the world has forgotten. They'd forget everything that's worth knowing if it wasn't for us, and if we weren't working so hard all the time to remind them. We are really the rememberers, aren't we: and it's they who are the forgetters? They think we've lost our way, and all the time we are the only ones who know the way; and it's because we let the clouds lead us. Now just think of it!" he exclaimed. "You lost Jimmy and through losing him you found heaven. That was worth while, wasn't it? Looked at in that way, heaven is really the place of lost souls."

The idea pleased him and he laughed. Eileen didn't laugh. She was being forcibly and persistently reminded of something which up to this time she had

overlooked; something that wouldn't let her think of anything else. She looked up at the sculptor wistfully.

"I've just remembered something," she said. "I would like to forget it, but I can't. I've remembered that I didn't have any supper, and that I didn't have any breakfast. Is there anything to eat in heaven? Because if there isn't I've got to go back."

"No supper!" exclaimed the sculptor, "and no breakfast, either! Well, I should say you couldn't forget that! Only the greatest rememberers that have ever lived could forget that. Of course there are things to eat here—milk and honey and everything else. And by the way," he went on, "there are baths in heaven, too. Do you ever remember having had a bath? Wouldn't you like one now?"

"Yes," replied Eileen, "I remember. I would like to have one now if it will wait until after I have had the milk and honey. I want to see honey."

"All right," said the sculptor, starting up and going into the big room. "There's a lovely person here whose name is Celestine. Celestine came here to take care of me, just the way you've come to take care of Jimmy. Celestine," he said, speaking very gently, "had a little girl—a little girl about as old as you are, and she died last year and came to heaven. I'll show her to you later; she's out there among the trees. I have an idea that some of her small things will be just right for you. Oh, Celestine!" he called, opening a door, and taking Eileen's hand they left the room together.

Presently he came back alone, and with his hands deep in his pockets stood pondering something.

"I suppose," he said to himself, "I ought to advertise for that baby. When things are lost or found you always put it in the paper. Those people are probably so ignorant that they'd never think of it and so hideously poor that they couldn't pay for it if they did."

Taking a note-book and a pencil from his pocket, he again sat down on the steps.

How on earth did you write such a thing!

What he finally evolved was this:

"Lost—A baby—just before the storm on Thursday evening, in a fish-store. Baby answers to the name of Jimmy

Higgins. Finder will please return to 55 Fairweather Place. It being a large baby, finder and returner will be given a large reward."

It looked very well, he thought, when it was done. As soon as Celestine had finished her ministrations to Eileen he would send it to a newspaper. Then he went back to his whistling and to his work with the common clay and forgot everything else.

A knocking at the door recalled him: three, four, five times some one knocked before he became conscious of the sound.

"Come in," he called. Eileen entered, Celestine behind her. She had on a white dress. She had on white things underneath. She had on white stockings. She felt just like a cloud.

"By Jove!" exclaimed the sculptor. "How nice you look! There's nothing like it, is there? Nothing in heaven or earth like soap and water. Never forget that, Eileen, whatever else you forget. Come here and let me look at you. How well everything fits, doesn't it?"

Then he turned to Celestine and said something in that heavenly language they used together, and Eileen knew by the sound of his voice and by the tears in Celestine's eyes that they must be speaking of the little girl who used to wear the soft white dress that she was wearing.

"Now what are you going to do, Eileen?" asked the sculptor. "I've got to work like everything."

"I'm going to look for the Murphy baby," replied Eileen. "Do you know where he is?"

"No, I don't," answered the sculptor. "I'm awfully poor at remembering names. You may run across him any moment out there."

Eileen went down the steps and then stopped.

"I had an orange all to myself," she said, dreamily. "It was very yellow, and honey is yellow, too. Celestine says it is made out of flowers and sunshine. I think I will go and sing to Jimmy about it. I'd forgotten all about Jimmy."

That evening, when the sculptor was dressing, Celestine brought him the newspaper. He didn't want Eileen to see it—a newspaper would be a jarring note in heaven.

Yes, there was his advertisement. He

viewed it with pride, for among the commonplace notices of missing dogs and shopping-bags it certainly was very striking. Then he read through the "Founds" carefully but unsuccessfully. No one had come across a baby in a fish-store.

There was, however, on another page a statement which attracted him. This statement was to the effect that the little girl, Martha Higgins, who had disappeared from her beautiful home on Thursday night, had not yet been heard from. That Mr. and Mrs. Higgins, the adoring parents, were distracted; that the canal was being dragged, and that the police were hot on the trail. There was a picture of the distracted parents—Mr. Higgins seated, Mrs. Higgins standing beside him, a palm tree and a waterfall in the background.

"Martha Higgins!" thought the sculptor. "That's a curious coincidence that there should be two children of the same name lost at the same time—a Jimmy and a Martha. It may be Jimmy's sister; but then—" Well, he gave it up. He would ask Eileen. The ways of the world were too much for him. Besides, he couldn't think and dress at the same time. Dressing demanded concentration. There he was again putting on the thing he had just taken off.

When he was ready he went out to join Eileen.

A supper table just large enough for two was set out on the grass. Here she was waiting for him.

"The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers."

Shadows such as only come at the end of a perfect day were gliding over the garden. Far away in the west through the trees glowed the sunset; it looked like another garden. The sculptor sat down and for a few moments watched Eileen with great satisfaction. Who or what, he wondered, had taught her the guiding of her spoon aright?

He poured out two glasses of milk. "Eileen," he said, handing her one, "did you ever hear of a little girl named Martha Higgins? Did Jimmy have a sister named Martha?"

Eileen's eyes widened. "Martha Higgins?" she said. "Why, that was me.

That was what they called me after I was adopted."

The sculptor threw back his head and laughed and laughed.

"Oh Lord!" he exclaimed, "that's funny! Do you know, Eileen, that out there in the world they're very much excited about you? You're lost, they think, and the canal is being dragged for you; and Mr. and Mrs. Higgins are having the time of their lives mourning for you, and the police are after you and—"

He got no further. Eileen sprang to her feet, and with a long-drawn wail flung herself upon him.

"Don't let them take me," she sobbed. "Don't let them take me in the covered wagon. Don't let them take me back to Mrs. Higgins!"

The sculptor put his arms about her. "Why, of course they won't take you," he said. "The brutes! We'll just let them go on hunting for you out there and all the time we'll sit back of the wall safe in heaven and laugh at them. I wish we could get on the wall and throw things at them, too, don't you? That would be fun, wouldn't it?"

Eileen lifted her head. She smiled doubtfully.

"But there's one policeman," she said, her voice still quivering, "that we mustn't hit. His name is Bill, and I like him. He carried Jimmy for me one day when it was raining."

"Oh no, we won't hurt Bill," assented the sculptor. "We'll send word to him to tie a handkerchief around his arm, or to wear a green feather or something, so that we'll know which he is."

"And we mustn't hit the bird-store man," said Eileen. "He is a very nice man. He loses babies, too."

"Oh, I wouldn't hit the bird-store man for anything," laughed the sculptor. "I want to know the bird-store man. He is the kind to be encouraged. And now where is your handkerchief? Let me dry your eyes, and let me see if I can fasten on your napkin as well as Celestine does. Oh, here she comes now. Tell her what fun we're going to have, sitting on the wall and throwing things. She'll join us. She's a fine shot and she likes to laugh."

But Celestine had something serious to attend to. She spoke to the sculptor and he arose.

"Excuse me, Eileen," he said. "There is some one here to see me. Celestine will stay with you while you finish your supper. Eat every bit of it—do you hear?" And he strode into the house and into Celestine's little tiled kitchen, closing the door behind him.

By the table sat a large woman. In her arms she was holding a large baby. The sculptor, in looking at them, thought it was rather hard to decide which was the larger.

"Good evening," he said, pleasantly. "So you saw my advertisement. Is this Jimmy Higgins?"

The woman stiffened. "Yes," she replied, "I seen it. But this ain't *Jimmy* Higgins; it never has been *Jimmy* Higgins; it never will be *Jimmy* Higgins. This is Albert Edward Higgins."

The sculptor knit his brows. "But I don't think I quite understand," he said.

"'Tain't very difficult," she answered, dryly. "Martha, she called 'em all Jimmy."

"Oh!" said the sculptor. "What an excellent idea! What a lot of trouble it must have saved her!" Then the truth flashed upon him. "Can it be," he said, bowing courteously, "that I have the honor of addressing Mrs. Higgins?"

The formidable one inclined her head. "The same," she replied.

"Well, tell me," said the sculptor, "where did you find Jimmy? Where had she left him?"

"Oh," answered Mrs. Higgins, sighing wearily, "she had left him up-stairs on the bed, where he belonged; and then she went out and forgot she left him there; and all the time we was huntin' for him, there he was at home yellin' for his supper."

The sculptor suddenly seemed to remember that one of the windows needed attention and began working furiously at it, pulling it up and down.

Mrs. Higgins watched him. He felt her scorn. "If," she said—"if you can leave that window alone for a minute I'd like you to tell me where Martha is."

The window came down with a bang. "Martha," he said, gravely—"Martha is no more."

This aroused her. She put the baby on the floor and stood up. She certainly was appalling.

"Do you mean she is dead?" she asked. "Yes," replied the sculptor, "Martha is dead and Eileen has been born again. Eileen is in heaven."

"I don't know what you are talking about," rejoined Mrs. Higgins, her voice rising. "You talk the same crazy way Martha used to. But I do know this: I know I adopted Martha. She belongs to me, and I've a right to know what's become of her and to have her back if I want her. If you've got her here you'd better hand her over or I'll have the law on you!"

Something leaped up in the sculptor, something that he very seldom knew was there. He faced Mrs. Higgins.

"Give Eileen back to you!" he said. "What do you think I am? There's not much good that I can do in the world and there are mighty few of its wrongs that I can right, but I can right this wrong. I won't have a butterfly put to work a treadmill if I can help it. You'll never have Eileen again, I assure you of that."

Mrs. Higgins grew quite alarmingly red in the face and her breath came quickly. "Then," she said, "you're no better than a common kidnapper, that's what you are. I suppose you know what happens to kidnappers?"

"No," replied the sculptor, "I haven't the least idea. I should think, though, that under some circumstances kidnapping might be quite an honorable calling."

Mrs. Higgins did not answer. She stooped to pick up Albert Edward from the floor.

The sculptor stepped forward. "Let me help you," he said, but she motioned him away.

"Don't," she said. "He's very heavy. You might strain yourself."

With the baby in her arms she started for the door.

"Wait a moment," said the sculptor. "I haven't finished yet. You don't really want Eileen back, you know you don't. But I want to be fair with you. Now I'm going to propose something. I'm going to propose buying Eileen from you. I want you to make me out a bill for all that you think you've spent on Eileen since you owned her and deduct from that all the hours of work you've gotten out of her; and then if it seems to me

pretty fair, why, I'll settle with you. What do you say to that?"

Mrs. Higgins thought for a few moments, her eyes very bright and hard.

"All right," she said at last. "I'll do that. I hope you'll like your bargain."

"Good," said the sculptor. "Shake hands on it. Bring the bill as soon as you can; to-morrow, if possible."

When Mrs. Higgins had departed, "By Jove!" he said to himself, "no one can say I'm not practical. Eileen will be a ransomed soul." And he went back to his supper.

Eileen had left the little table, and when he had finished he sought and found her by the pool among the roses. She looked up at him, but she didn't speak, and he sat down beside her on the stone rim.

"What are you thinking of, Eileen?" he asked in a little while.

"I was wondering," said Eileen—"I was wondering why I cannot find my father here. He would have liked it more than anything else."

"Tell me about him," said the sculptor. "Do you remember him very well?"

"Not very well," she replied. "Mrs. Higgins used to say that he was like me; that he forgot everything, too; and once I heard some one say that he died of a broken heart. What makes people die of a broken heart?"

"Ah," said the sculptor, softly, "it's only those who remember greatly who die of a broken heart. Your father must have been a great rememberer. What was it he was remembering all the time? Do you know?"

"Perhaps," replied Eileen, "he was remembering my mother."

The sculptor was silent. Eileen turned toward him.

"The way you look out of your eyes," she said, "is the way he used to look out of his eyes. I think maybe somehow you and he are the same, and so he's here, after all."

"That may be," replied the sculptor, quietly. "I should be very proud if that is the way it is."